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	TEDE-00	INR-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	DCP-01	NSAE-00
	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7896
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 007266

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH

LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY

PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS

NAIROBI FOR TERRY PFLAUMER

PASS USTR FOR ROSA WHITAKER

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#) [ZANU](#) [PF](#)
SUBJECT: NEW ZIMBABWE POLITBURO STRENGTHENS MNANGAGWA'S
BID TO SUCCEED MUGABE

REFS: A) HARARE 7164, B) HARARE 7134

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES EARL IRVING FOR REASONS:
1.5 (B) AND (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: PRESIDENT MUGABE'S NEW ZANU-PF POLITBURO, APPOINTED DECEMBER 15 AT THE SPECIAL PARTY CONGRESS (REF B), STRENGTHENS SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT EMMERSON MNANGAGWA'S POSITION IN THE PARTY AND COULD SIGNAL MUGABE'S INTENTION TO MAKE MNANGAGWA HIS SUCCESSOR. SINCE JUNE'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, MNANGAGWA HAS BEEN BROUGHT BACK FROM THE BRINK OF POLITICAL EXTINCTION AFTER LOSING HIS LEGISLATIVE SEAT. THE NEW POLITBURO ALSO EFFECTIVELY MARGINALIZES THE NDEBELE AND MANICA ETHNIC GROUPS, TWO GROUPS INCREASINGLY VIEWED IN THE PARTY AS SYMPATHETIC TO THE OPPOSITION MDC, ACCORDING TO ONE LOCAL POLITICAL OBSERVER. MNANGAGWA, WIDELY FEARED AND DESPISED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, COULD BE AN EVEN MORE REPRESSIVE LEADER IF HE TURNS OUT TO BE MUGABE'S ANNOINTED ONE. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) MUGABE'S NEWLY APPOINTED RULING PARTY POLITBURO, ANNOUNCED DECEMBER 15 AT THE ZANU-PF SPECIAL CONGRESS, APPEARS TO FAVOR THE ASCENDANCY OF SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT EMMERSON MNANGAGWA. MNANGAGWA, WHO DIRECTED THE CIO AND PRESIDED OVER THE MATABELELAND MASSACRES DURING THE
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1980S, WAS ON THE BRINK OF POLITICAL OBLIVION EARLIER THIS YEAR AFTER HE LOST HIS KWEKWE SEAT IN THE JUNE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS TO THE OBSCURE BLESSING CHEBONDO OF THE MDC. MUGABE RESCUED HIM BY ENSURING HE WAS ELECTED SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT IN AUGUST. MNANGAGWA'S POSITION WAS FURTHER STRENGTHENED WITH HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE NUMBER FOUR POSITION IN THE PARTY AS SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION (ONLY PRESIDENT MUGABE AND THE TWO VICE-PRESIDENTS HOLD HIGHER POSITIONS). MNANGAGWA REPLACED DIDYMUS MUTASA, WHO IS CANINELY LOYAL TO MNANGAGWA AND WHOSE OWN PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRATIONS NOW HAVE BEEN SIDELINED. FROM THIS PLATFORM, MNANGAGWA WILL BE ABLE TO EXERCISE CONSIDERABLE CONTROL OVER ZANU-PF'S STRUCTURES AND THE PEOPLE WHO FILL THEM.

3. (C) STRENGTHENING MNANGAGWA'S POSITION IN THE NEW POLITBURO IS THE APPOINTMENT OF HIS ALLIES TO IMPORTANT POSITIONS AND THE SIDELINING OF HIS RIVALS. ACCORDING TO THE "ZIMBABWE INDEPENDENT," RICHARD HOVE IS AN ALLY OF MNANGAGWA'S FROM HIS HOME MIDLANDS PROVINCE, AND WAS MADE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. HOVE WAS ALSO

APPOINTED TO HEAD UP THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE'S NEW LAND REFORM STANDING COMMITTEE (REF B). THE "INDEPENDENT" DESCRIBES OTHER POLITBURO ALLIES OF THE SPEAKER AS: DAVID KARIMANZIRA (MASHONALAND EAST GOVERNOR AND ZANU-PF SECRETARY FOR FINANCE), WITNESS MANGWENDE (DEPUTY

SIPDIS
SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION), AND ENOS CHIKOWORE

SIPDIS
(SECRETARY FOR LAND REFORM AND RESETTLEMENT). EACH NOW OCCUPIES SOME OF THE POLITBURO'S MOST CRITICAL PORTFOLIOS, AND EACH WAS ELEVATED FROM OBSCURE POSTS IN THE POLITBURO STRUCTURE. THEY ARE ALSO MOSTLY SPENT FORCES KNOWN FOR
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THEIR STRIDENT AND SHRILL ANTI-WESTERN REMARKS. (NOTE: ALTHOUGH IT IS UNKNOWN TO WHAT EXTENT YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MINISTER AND PARTY COMMISSAR BORDER GEZI SUPPORTS MNANGAGWA, THE 36-YEAR-OLD GEZI HAS ALL THE MAKINGS OF AN MNANGAGWA PROTEGE. GEZI, AS GOVERNOR OF MASHONALAND WEST, WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN DIRECTING THE TERROR CAMPAIGN AGAINST MDC SUPPORTERS IN HIS PROVINCE EARLIER THIS YEAR, AND HE IS CURRENTLY LEADING A CAMPAIGN OF VIOLENCE IN THE BIKITA WEST CONSTITUENCY FOR THE JANUARY BY-ELECTION [REF A]. END NOTE.)

14. (C) MNANGAGWA RIVALS, SUCH AS ENERGY MINISTER SYDNEY SEKERAMAYI AS SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND CHILD WELFARE, AND FORMER ARMY GENERAL SOLOMON MUJURU AS MEMBER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO, HAVE BEEN RELEGATED TO THE POLITBURO PERIPHERY. ACCORDING TO UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE PROFESSOR BRIAN RAFTOPOULOS, RIVAL EDDISON ZVOBGO WAS FORCED OUT OF THE POLITBURO ALTOGETHER AS A WAY TO PROTECT MNANGAGWA'S ASCENDANCY. A POTENTIAL RIVAL, FINANCE MINISTER SIMBA MAKONI--OFTEN TOUTED AS A POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR TO MUGABE--WAS MADE THE PARTY'S DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF MNANGAGWA'S FRIEND HOVE. THE NEW POLITBURO HAS BEEN SET UP TO SUPPORT MNANGAGWA AND

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SIDELINE HIS FOES, ACCORDING TO RAFTOPOULOS.

15. (C) RAFTOPOULOS TOLD US THAT HE ALSO SEES AN ETHNIC DIMENSION TO THE POLITBURO APPOINTMENTS. THE NDEBELE AND MANICA--WHOSE HOME PROVINCES ARE DOMINATED BY THE MDC--ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE OPPOSITION, AND ZANU-PF MEMBERS FROM THOSE AREAS ARE MORE OFTEN SUSPECTED OF HARBORING SYMPATHIES FOR THE OPPOSITION. AS A RESULT, THE NDEBELE OR MANICA NO LONGER RETAIN INDEPENDENT POWER BASES IN ZANU-PF, AND THE NEW POLITBURO REFLECTS THAT, ACCORDING TO RAFTOPOULOS. NONE OF THE NEW POLITBURO

DEPARTMENT HEADS HAIL FROM MATABELELAND OR MANICALAND, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE. THE DEPARTURE OF ZVOBGO WEAKENS HIS POSITION IN KALANGA-DOMINATED MASVINGO, WHERE ZANU-PF AND THE MDC ARE BATTLING FOR INFLUENCE. ZANU-PF IS TRYING TO THWART A POSSIBLE NDEBELE-KALANGA ALLIANCE LED BY ZVOBGO, WHO HAS BEEN TRYING TO DILUTE THE ZANU-PF LEADERSHIP'S AUTHORITY IN MASVINGO, RAFTOPOULOS STATED. ZANU-PF IS TRYING TO ESTABLISH ITS OWN "POWER AXIS" BETWEEN THE ZEZURU OF MASHONALAND AND THE KALANGA OF MASVINGO BY SIDELINING ZVOBGO AND INSTALLING PARTY LEADERS LOYAL TO HARARE IN MASVINGO, ACCORDING TO RAFTOPOULOS.

16. (C) COMMENT: MUGABE'S NEW POLITBURO NOT ONLY CONSOLIDATES HIS OWN POSITION IN ZANU-PF, IT APPEARS TO PUT MNANGAGWA NEAR THE APEX OF PARTY POWER. IF MUGABE
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IS INDEED THINKING OF STEPPING DOWN A YEAR OR TWO AFTER WINNING ONE MORE TERM, AS A NUMBER OF INTERLOCUTORS HAVE TOLD US, NOW WOULD BE THE TIME TO BEGIN PREPARING A SUCCESSOR. MNANGAGWA IS A LONG-TIME AND CLOSE ALLY OF MUGABE AND HAS THE FULL CONFIDENCE OF THE PRESIDENT. THE SPEAKER'S FEARED REPUTATION AS AN "ENFORCER" WOULD SERVE MUGABE'S DESIRE TO HOLD ZANU-PF TOGETHER AND DEFEAT THE MDC USING ANY MEANS NECESSARY. IF HE BECAME PRESIDENT, MNANGAGWA COULD TURN OUT TO BE JUST AS DICTATORIAL AS MUGABE; RAFTOPOULOS BELIEVES HE WOULD BE EVEN MORE RUTHLESS THAN MUGABE. IT IS STILL FAR TOO EARLY TO TELL WHETHER MNANGAGWA IS THE ACTUAL HEIR APPARENT, BUT RECENT EVENTS MAKE HIM THE EARLY FAVORITE.

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